

Urban District of Woodhall Spa

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

1970

WOODHALL SPA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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of the
Medical Officer of Health
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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Medical Officer of Health

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Telephone: Horncastle 2208.

Public Health Inspector

D. A. NORMAN, M.A.P.H.I.

The Highways, Sewerage and Public Health Committees deal with the majority of Public Health Matters although a separate Parks and Playing Fields Committee deal with swimming baths.

Public Health Committee

F.W. Mills
C.H. Brown
J.W. Fletcher
L.D. Fowler
W. Gill
D.W. Harrison
E.W. Harber
A. Leggate
M.J.C. Wheeler

Housing Committee

F.W. Mills
Mrs. M.F. Farmery
A.H.H. Brown
J.W. Fletcher
W. Gill
E.W. Harber
A. Leggate
R.G. Webb
M.J.C. Wheeler

To The Chairman and Members of
The Urban District Council of Woodhall Spa.

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Farmery and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my annual report for 1970.

Healthwise this year was favourable to Woodhall Spa with a rise in births and no appreciable increase in deaths. Closer liaison between the family doctors and the County Council doctor running the Child Health Centre has resulted from the removal of the Centre to the premises of Drs' Robertson and Armour.

Housing for the elderly has been the major undertaking of the authority and continued into 1971 before any of the new batch were ready for occupation. Whilst the number of eligible applicants, applying present criteria, may seem to be small, it is likely that the survival period of tenants will increase, so that there will be a continued demand for new building of this type. Furthermore, as this is a relatively new facility to the elderly, the total demand has not, in all probability, been realized. On the other hand the number of jobs available to potential council family house tenants in the Spa is limited, and so the demand for orthodox housing is quite modest and hardly warrants building at the present time.

The increments of population that occur in excess of the natural increase, are of those able and willing to commute by car, or those who come to the Spa in retirement. In general, the native population, as it grows up must, like that of the surrounding country, either commute or emigrate to find work. Since bringing goods and services to small communities is expensive, the incentive to the less wealthy is to migrate nearer the centres of work and supply. Woodhall is not likely in the foreseeable future to attract new industry.

It is apparant that we are in the midst of a social revolution which has been going on for decades and the end of which cannot yet be foreseen. Social structures are being swept away and we do not, as yet, have much idea of the way their surviving functions will be administered. It is typical of this that more and more new minor functions are being imposed on local councils which are ill-equipped to perform them, and which themselves are doomed to early dissolution.

Certain matters of policy regarding the Spa, which are not new to the Council are, however worth recording for the readers of this report. Much of the housing in the District is of the large Victorian type of family house, whilst an increasing proportion of it is less suitable to present day needs without extensive conversion works. Unless these properties are brought up to conform with the present needs their life will be limited and this is reflected in their current market prices. There is at present some support from the R.A.F. families and this may continue for a long time - or it may not, since in the field of defence, change is an essential weapon. There is, therefore, a case for generous consideration of

conversion projects to make more of the smaller-type dwellings, now so popular, on existing sites rather than allow amenity-trees to be felled and a collection of brash modern conventional dwellings to appear on a sort of scorched earth.

There is throughout the country, a need for little flatlets for the short-term occupancy of the newly married who, very often, want a period to settle down together whilst both working and saving before 'going broody'. No official provision has ever been made for this social group which is relatively new, but quite real, so that they have been prime targets for the private landlord and for the sale of properties not wholly suitable but offering independence.

The growth of property and the increase in sewage for treatment has prompted a critical review of existing arrangements. Intermittent pumping has, it is well known, allowed sewers to surcharge thus expelling gases from any available openings. Originally, ventilating columns were erected at the heads of sewers to discharge these gases at a height whence their rapid dispersal could be expected. When these no longer exist, such gases as are formed may well appear round houses, especially near the head of sewers and be an invisible and unsuspected source of nuisance. The current installation of automatic pumping control should prevent surcharging of sewers and if, as I suspect, this has been the source of smell nuisances, they should then cease. In new sewerage systems, the vent pipe on each property is open to the sewer and free ventilation occurs throughout the system but old property used to be fitted with interceptors which prevent this. New properties are thus liable to complaints of this nature.

Refuse collection and disposal is a major task for all local authorities but it bears more heavily on the authorities too small to be able to have a spare vehicle ready to take the road to allow servicing of their fleet. If the fleet consists of one vehicle, to provide 100% reserve would generally be regarded as unreasonable and the alternatives of hiring or liaising with a neighbouring authority are necessary. My observation of the vehicles available for hire does not greatly commend them, and with more stringent control of Heavy Goods Vehicles, many will be off the road and the rest exorbitantly expensive. Two massive reports have been published by the Working party on Refuse Disposal but it is unlikely that their recommendations could be applicable to a very small authority approaching the end of its existence. Refuse collection remains a problem but one receiving consideration. Extra space may be made available on the existing tip, poorly sited, though it is, and it is envisaged that with reorganisation the disposal of refuse will become the responsibility of the new County. Collection will remain a district responsibility and there is a hint that this will soon be improved.

Last year I mentioned the introduction of vaccination of school-girls against german measles to avoid the catastrophic risk of rubella in early pregnancy. The response has been most gratifying and side effects virtually non-existent.

This year, older members may have been surprised to hear that smallpox vaccination is to be restricted in future to those persons at special risk - doctors, nurses, ambulance crews, travellers outside Europe, etc. This is because of the world decline of the disease to a point where the risks of vaccination in England exceed the risks of smallpox. This represents a pattern of progress in health care, resulting from constant review of what is really worth-while and what is perpetuated by habit. Other changes may be expected in the future as other diseases become subject to world wide control.

Progress has been made towards improving the distribution of water within the district, by use of plastic piping to replace ancient cast iron pipes. Even so, it is found that any sudden change in the rate of flow, such as happens on wash-days, causes a churning up of old-standing sediment and muddy water comes from the taps. Technically this is quite harmless, even beneficial, but it is offensive to people wanting a drink of clean cool water. The water quickly clears on standing in a jug, and a simple paper filter would clear it. To remove the source of the trouble might cost many thousands of pounds and cause a massive highway disturbance to lay the new pipes. It is, I understand, the Board's policy to replace cast-iron with plastic in stages and, eventually the cure will be complete.

Avoidable deaths always cause concern to the Medical Officer of Health and this year their variety suggests that we are not negligent in any particular way. Two deaths are recorded as due to motor accidents. The police, with their particular philosophy, are inclined to restrict the word 'accident' to those crashes for which no mechanical or human failure can be found. The rest, due to mechanical failure should be reduced progressively, and at a cost, by more frequent and vigorous checks on vehicles and the human failures may be reduced by greater training and discipline. Here there is a long and unpopular road to travel.

This report is necessarily abbreviated because of the prolonged absence, through illness, of the Public Health Inspector whose report and assistance are of so much value in compiling my report.

My thanks are due, however to all Members and Staff who have contributed during the year to the execution of my job and the production of the report.

I remain,
Your obedient Servant,



Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS

Area of Urban District :	1874 acres
Registrar General's Mid-Year Estimate of Resident Population :	2280
Density of Population :	1.20 persons per acre
Number of Inhabited Dwellings :	765

VITAL STATISTICS

<u>BIRTHS</u>	Male	Female
<u>Live Births</u>	16	17
Rate per 1000 population	14.5	(E & W 16.0)
Ratio of locally adjusted birth rate to national rate	1.18	
Illegitimate live births % total	Nil	(E & W 8%)
<u>Still Births</u>		
Rate per 1000 total live and still births	57	(E & W 13)
<u>Infant Deaths</u> (deaths under 1 year)	0	
<u>Infant Mortality Rates</u>		
Total infant deaths per 1000 total live births	61	(E & W 18)
Legitimate infant deaths per 1000 legitimate live births	61	(E & W 17)
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1000 illegitimate live births	0	(E & W 26)
<u>Comparability Factors</u>		
Births	1.30	
Deaths	0.45	

Neo-natal Mortality Rate

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>
(deaths under four weeks per 1000 total live births)	0	0	0

Early Neo-natal Mortality Rate

(deaths under one week per 1000 total live births)	0	0	0
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

(stillbirths and deaths under one week combined per 1000 total live and still births)	0	0	57 (E&W 23)
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Maternal Mortality (including abortion)

Number of deaths	0	0	0
Rate per 1000 total live and still births	0	0	0

DEATHS

Male	19	20	22
Female	28	28	28
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Totals	47	48	50
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Deaths per 1000 population 21.9

Locally adjusted death rate 9.9
National Death Rate 11.7

Causes of Death at ages under 65 years

Cancer	2
Accident	1
Endocrine disease	1
Meningitis	1
Multiple Sclerosis	1
Coronary disease	2
Other disease of Circulatory	1
Motor Accidents	2

Causes of Death as shown in the Registrar General's Short List

Short List No.	Cause of Death	Sex	Total	Under 4 weeks	4 Weeks & under 1 year	Age in years							75 & over	
			All Ages			1 - 5	5 - 15	15 - 25	25 - 35	35 - 45	45 - 55	55 - 65		
B19(1)	Malignant Neoplasm, Buccal Cavity etc.	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
B19(3)	Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
B19(6)	Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	M	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
B19(9)	Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate	F	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
B46(1)	Malignant Neoplasm, Other Endocrine etc.	M	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B24	Diseases	F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B46(4)	Meningitis	M	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B28	Multiple Sclerosis	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B29	Ischaemic Heart Disease	F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
B30	Other Forms of Heart Disease	F	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
B46(6)	Cerebrovascular Disease	F	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
B32	Other Diseases of Circulatory System	M	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B33(2)	Pneumonia	F	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
B38	Asthma	M	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
B39	Nephritis and Nephrosis	F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Hyperplasia of Prostate	M	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
		F	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Short List No.	Cause of Death	Sex	Total All Ages	Under 4 Weeks	4 Weeks & under 1 year	Age in years								
						1 - 5	5 - 15	15 - 25	25 - 35	35 - 45	45 - 55	55 - 65	65 - 75 & over	
B47	Motor Vehicle Accidents	M	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
		F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BE48	All other Accidents	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		F	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL ALL CAUSES			22	-	1	-	1	1	1	4	6	8		
			28	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	24		

The National Health Service

No changes have occurred in the National Health Service during the year.

Notifications of Infectious Disease

Scarletina	1
Whooping Cough	3
Measles	1

Water Supply

The water supply of Woodhall Spa is under the control of the East Lincolnshire Water Board. No complaints have reached me regarding the quantity or quality of the water supplied.

Copies of bacteriological reports are received regularly.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Whilst the system has worked, despite inherent difficulties of inadequate fall, gross ingress of soil water and inadequate works capacity, but it causes an inordinate amount of worry to the Surveyor and his staff. A thorough examination by Consultant Engineers has been commissioned.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

Refuse collection and disposal continues on the shoe-string system - just coping but with nothing in reserve. It is now too late in the life of present Local Government to do more than make do and mend. Perhaps the sanest solution would be to contract with the neighbouring district to undertake the service.

Common Lodging Houses

This item is required by the Department. It may suffice to say that no such institution has ever, to my knowledge, existed in Woodhall Spa.

Food and Drugs Act, 1955

(a) Milk Supplies - Brucella Abortus

This is dealt with mainly at County level. I am always informed of positive results. No action was necessary in respect of Woodhall Spa.

(b) Liquid Egg (Pasteurization) Regulations 1963

No pasteurization plant operates in the area.

(c) Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960

All premises to which Regulations 16 and 19 respectively apply, conform thereto.

(d) Poultry Inspection

No poultry processing premises operate within the Spa.

REPORT OF WORK DONE BY PUBLIC HEALTH

INSPECTOR DURING THE YEAR

1970 *

I regret that owing to the protracted illness of the Surveyor and Public Health Inspector, no report of the work of his department is available.

